

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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NSAE-00 NSCE-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7827

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: MOPS IS PLO LE

SUBJ: ISRAELI PRISONER OF PALESTINIANS

REF: (A) BEIRUT 1966, (B) BEIRUT 1985

1. SUMMARY. PALESTINIANS DISPLAYED ISRAELI SOLDIER CAPTURED
IN EARLY APRIL TO PRESS CORPS AND ANNOUNCED THAT HE WOULD BE
TRIED AS PRISONER OF WAR. IT APPEARED HE WAS BEING WELL
TREATED. END SUMMARY.

2. BEIRUT PRESS CARRIES ACCOUNT APRIL 28 OF VISIT ARRANGED
FOR GROUP OF JOURNALISTS BY PFLP/GC TO PRIVATE ABRAHAM NESSIM
AMRAM "SOMEWHERE IN SOUTH LEBANON." ENGLISH LANGUAGE IKE STORY,
BASED ON AP, SAYS THAT AMRAM, AGED 34, WAS CAPTURED IN AN AMBUSH
APRIL 4 (REFTELS) AT RAS EL-AIN AND HAS BEEN HELD PRISONER SOME-
WHERE IN THE SOUTH EVER SINCE. PFLP-GC ESCORTS BROUGHT
JOURNALISTS TO A "WELL FURNISHED APARTMENT GUARDED BY A GROUP OF
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GUNMEN" TO TALK TO AMRAM. IKE QUOTED AMRAM: "THEY ARE BEING
VERY NICE TO ME . . . I EAT MY FOOD WITH THEM, I SLEEP IN THE
SAME ROOM WITH THEM, AND I HAVE NO COMPLAINTS." STORY SAYS
AMRAM SAID HIS CAPTORS EVEN OFFERED NIGHTTIME FEMALE COMPANION-
SHIP, BUT HE REFUSED. AMRAM SAID HE WAS BORN IN LIBYA, SETTLED
IN ISRAEL IN 1950, AND JOINED ISRAELI ARMY ENGINEER CORPS IN
1964.

3. AMRAM'S STORY OF HIS CAPTURE WENT AS FOLLOWS: AT SUNDOWN APRIL 4, HE, FOUR OTHER ISRAELI SOLDIERS, ONE OFFICER AND ONE ISRAELI CIVILIAN WERE TRAVELING NORTHWARD BY CAR NEAR RAS EL-AIN. THE CIVILIAN HAD BEEN PICKED UP ALONG THE WAY, AND HAD BEEN CARRYING CHARTS AND SMALL CAMERA. SUDDENLY SOME THIRTY PALESTINIANS APPEARED BEFORE THE VEHICLE AND ORDERED THEM TO SURRENDER. THE OFFICER WAS OPPOSED TO SURRENDER, AND THE GROUP DECIDED TO TRY TO ESCAPE. PALESTINIANS FIRED ON CAR AS IT WAS HEADING BACK, KILLING THREE OF THE PASSENGERS. AMRAM HIMSELF WAS SHOT IN THE ARM. HE MANAGED TO ESCAPE AND SLEPT IN FIELD NEARBY BUT FOUND HIMSELF SURROUNDED BY PALESTINIANS WHEN HE AWOKE. "KNOWING THE FEDAYEEN AS TERRORISTS, I WAS ONE HUNDRED PERCENT SURE THEY WERE GOING TO KILL ME. BUT THEY DIDN'T. IT'S LIKE A DREAM. I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M HERE AND ALIVE IN THE MIDST OF THE FEDAYEEN."

4. PALESTINIANS BRIEFED JOURNALISTS AND SAID HE WOULD BE TRIED AS PRISONER OF WAR. PALESTINIAN SPOKESMAN WAS QUOTED AS SAYING, "AMRAM'S INDICTMENT INCLUDES CHARGES OF PARTICIPATION IN WAR AGAINST THE ARABS, INFILTRATING PALESTINIAN POSITIONS AND ENTERING LEBANESE AREAS TO COMMIT AGGRESSION AGAINST PALESTINIAN AND LEBANESE PEOPLE." SPOKESMAN HAD SAID THAT INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS AND DEFENSE ATTORNEYS WOULD BE PERMITTED TO ATTEND "FIELD TRIAL" AND "AMRAM WILL ENJOY UNBRIDLED RIGHTS AS A HUMAN BEING AND A PRISONER OF WAR." HE SAID AMRAM WAS SUSPECTED OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BEING AN INTELLIGENCE AGENT RATHER THAN A COMBATANT.

5. LEBANESE LEFTIST DAILY AS SAFIR CLAIMED IT WAS ONLY LEBANESE NEWSPAPER REPRESENTED AT MEETING, AND ADDED FOLLOWING DETAILS (COMMENT: WHICH MAY BE IN WHOLE OR IN PART FABRICATED): MEETING WITH JOURNALISTS LASTED OVER TWO HOURS. AMRAM SPOKE OF POLITICS ONLY WITH DIFFICULTY "BECAUSE OF HIS LIMITED AND NARROW CULTURAL HORIZON." AMRAM WAS FROM "GROUP NO. 601" AND A VETERAN OF THE 1967 AND 1973 WARS. AMRAM (HIMSELF AN ORIENTAL JEW) SAID EVERYONE IN ISRAEL FELT IMPACT OF WESTERN JEWISH DISCRIMINATION. PRIME MINISTER BEGIN'S TALK OF PEACE IS "MERE WORDS," AND EVERYONE IS AWARE OF HIS MILITARY RECORD AT DEIR YASSIN AND THE KING DAVID HOTEL. THE ISRAELI INVASION OF SOUTH LEBANON WAS "CRUEL AND SHAMEFUL . . . WE HAD ORDERS FROM OFFICERS TO KILL OR DESTROY EVERYTHING THAT ANNOYED US. WE WERE TOLD TO KILL ON THE SPOT ANY PALESTINIAN, EVEN IF HE WERE UNARMED." AMRAM REPORTEDLY ALSO SAID HE HIMSELF WITNESSED ISRAELI TRUCKS CARRYING OFF LOOT FROM SOUTH LEBANESE VILLAGES.

DECONTROL DECEMBER 3, 1978.

PARKER

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